



2021 ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL  
**CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Please return by: February 19, 2021**

You may return completed questionnaires to: [dlacomb@tmaillinois.org](mailto:dlacomb@tmaillinois.org)

# 2021 ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Running for:  Mayor/Village President  Trustee/Alderman

Municipality: Wheeling

Mark Smith

(224) 434-0921

---

---

First & Last Name

---

---

Campaign Phone

---

PO Box 692

---

Campaign Address

---

Campaign Fax

---

Wheeling

---

IL

---

60090

---

Forward@MovingWheelingForward.com

---

City

---

State

---

Zip

---

Campaign Email

List any local manufacturers who are supporting your candidacy:

---

Kim McDonald

---

Microtech Machine

---

Name

---

Company

---

Anton Koretskov

---

Icar Team

---

Name

---

Company

---

Absolute Turn

---

Name

---

Company

Lee Waller

Genesis 1 Technology, Ltd.

**(Please provide a 1-page bio with this questionnaire)**

## QUESTIONS

### TAXATION

Despite the significant challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. manufacturing continues to thrive in the global marketplace, especially here in Illinois. The Chicago metropolitan area contains five out of the 10 most concentrated manufacturing zip codes in America.

But external factors continue to place Illinois manufacturers in a precarious position. In Illinois, we pay some of the highest sales, property and income taxes in the United States. In a global economy, Illinois-based manufacturers compete nationally and internationally for work.

Tax demands, in addition to business expenses, may determine whether bids are won or lost. Losing bids risk good-paying jobs and the generous economic benefits resulting from Illinois-based manufacturing.

Do you support/oppose allowing local governments to abate all or

Support

Oppose

a portion of their property tax for small manufacturers?

Do you support/oppose freezing the municipal tax levy at its current amount so the tax rate can start to come down and property owners can begin to see much needed tax relief?      x Support       Oppose

Do you support/oppose creating a tax exemption for energy used in the manufacturing process?      x Support       Oppose

Do you support/oppose adding purchases of production-related, tangible personal property to manufacturing machinery and equipment exempted from sales tax?      x Support       Oppose

**MINIMUM WAGE**

Governor Pritzker signed a massive minimum wage increase into law in 2019 that will nearly double the minimum wage in Illinois over the next few years. The latest increase to \$11/hour kicked in on Jan. 1, 2021 and will increase \$1/hour each year until it reaches \$15/hour by 2025. Such a drastic minimum wage increase will surge costs for Illinois employers and lead to layoffs and fewer opportunities for young people and less-skilled workers.

Do you support/oppose the phase in of the state minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2025?       Support      x Oppose

Would you encourage legislators to support/oppose amending the law to create a regional implementation plan where areas with a higher cost of living (ie. Chicago) would face a higher minimum wage than suburban or downstate regions?      x Support       Oppose

Do you support/oppose a lower minimum wage (training wage) for teenagers who work less than 650 hours/year?      x Support       Oppose

**REGULATION**

Manufacturing in the United States has changed, becoming more precise and higher value thanks to improved technology and cloud-based manufacturing. We are leading the way with performance and technological advances resulting in high-paying, high-performance jobs for skilled American workers.

Overly burdensome regulations at the federal, state and local levels stifle innovation, invade a company's culture, impact its productivity and, inevitably, thwart its bottom line. Employers already understand their employees' safety and happiness are crucial to their company's success and reason enough for investment. That's why nearly all TMA employers already offer vacation and sick days, employee training, and commonly offer salaries starting at 25 percent above the impending minimum wage.

Manufacturing operations often require special needs that don't fit perfectly into municipal zoning classifications. Do you support/oppose providing flexibility through variances to allow manufacturing companies to locate or expand in your community?      x Support       Oppose

If elected, would you support/oppose waiving or reducing tap-on fees and/or providing other incentives to encourage manufacturers to build new facilities in your municipality?  Support  Oppose

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous strains on manufacturers, who have faced significant interference from the State of Illinois while trying to provide essential products our society needs. Our manufacturing facilities are already among the safest and healthiest workplaces with employee health and safety the top priority. Do you support/oppose the Illinois mandatory lockdowns that have limited commerce here while manufacturers in surrounding states prosper?  Support  Oppose

---

**GENERAL** (Please answer each question in 150 words or less – feel free to provide answers on a separate sheet)

---

---

**Why are you running for office?**

---

As successful developers and small business leaders, we've had a front-row seat to the village's economic development failures. Over the past decade, hundreds of millions of dollars of development have gone to neighboring communities, costing Wheeling jobs, revenues, and vitality. Restaurant Row is dying, and we're likely to lose more of our great restaurants to the pandemic. Our small businesses feel neglected by their local government, especially after getting virtually no assistance during COVID. And our retail spaces are emptier every year.

As a result, the village is facing a budget crisis. Because of the village's poor fiscal management, the village has a \$1.6 million deficit in 2021, and village debt is up 30% in the last decade. With sales taxes plummeting due to our lack of economic development, the village has compensated by increasing taxes, over doubling our tax levy rate over the past decade.

---

**What do you hope to accomplish if you are elected?**

---

Using our collective development and business expertise, we will get Wheeling growing again. This will bring good-paying local jobs to our community. It will grow revenues for the village, so our local government becomes less reliant on property taxes. And it will generate excitement and vitality in Wheeling so our families can spend their time and money here instead of outside our community.

We will also put an end to the continual property tax increases that are hurting our families and small businesses. As experienced business leaders who have managed budgets and payrolls, we will restore fiscal responsibility in the Village of Wheeling. We will manage your tax dollars with a single thought in mind: "If we don't have it, we don't spend it." We will balance the village's budget, pay down our debt, rebuild our reserves, and stop the property tax hikes.

---

We're stepping up to run because we love our hometown. We refuse to let our village continue to suffer without unifying leadership with a vision to bring excitement and community pride to Wheeling.

---

**Why should a manufacture support your candidacy?**

---

Using our collective development and business expertise, we will get Wheeling growing again. This will bring good-paying local jobs to our community. It will grow revenues for the village so our local government becomes less reliant on property taxes. And it will generate excitement and vitality in Wheeling so our families can spend their time and money here instead of outside our community.

Thank you for taking time to respond to our query. We will share your responses with TMA membership. Thank you for your interest in Illinois manufacturing and our industry's pertinent future in your community.

---

Candidate Signature

Date

## **Mark Smith for Village President**

Mark Smith is a widely respected development and business expert who is uniquely qualified to Move Wheeling Forward.

Growing up in a military family, Mark's father was assigned to serve on a nuclear submarine, which later led him to a career in the nuclear industry. After spending the early part of his life living in several states, Mark wanted the roots his wife had in Wheeling. She was a Wheeling high school graduate and her family had built Kilcoynes and Doris Tree Top and he enjoyed the hometown feeling Wheeling had to offer.

Now a 39-year Wheeling resident, Mark has a history of working to improve his community. As a developer, Mark began work on the 96-unit Park Point Condominium project in 1999. In 2000, he worked with the village to bring the Northshore Westin Development to Wheeling. In 2002, he purchased the blighted property across the street from the Westin Development where he built 240 condominium units. These projects have generated millions of dollars of tax revenue for the Village of Wheeling.

Mark was on the Park Point Condominium Board for 2 years. He is currently on the Prairie Park Condominium Association Board where he has served for the past 11 years. He helped operate and coach the Bison Wrestling Club for 25 years, operating out of both Wheeling and Buffalo Grove High Schools, and was a 28-year member of the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation. Mark was also a youth baseball and football coach for the Wheeling Park District for over a decade.

His wife, Vivian, was a Park District Board member from 2006-2009, and she has also been active in the Wheeling Chamber of Commerce and Wheeling Helping Hands. A member of the Wheeling High School Athletic Boosters for 17 years, last year Vivian was inducted to the Wheeling High School Hall of Fame as a supporter of Wheeling Athletics. Mark and Vivian have raised 5 children in this town he loves.